

## Work Instruction

**DIRECTIVE NO.** 270-WI-1490.0.1C  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 1, 2012  
**EXPIRATION DATE:** November 1, 2017

**APPROVED BY Signature:** Original Signed By  
**NAME:** Marilyn Tolliver  
Chief, Information and Logistics Management  
**TITLE:** Division

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### COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

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**Responsible Office:** 270/Information and Logistics Management Division

**Title:** Handling Suspicious Mail

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## PREFACE

### P.1 PURPOSE

This work instruction provides the basic guidelines for the identification and handling of suspicious mail items and the procedures that shall be followed in the event that a suspicious mail item is discovered. This document was written in accordance with the various United States Postal Service (USPS) and U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) mail security guidelines.

### P.2 APPLICABILITY

This work instruction shall apply to all employees of the Mail Services Center (MSC) who handle the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) mail items. The work instruction will also generally apply to any employee of the Information and Logistics Management Division or its logistics support contractor who may come into contact with GSFC mail items.

### P.3 REFERENCES

- a. USPS, Guide to Mail Center Security
- b. [270-WI-4520.2.2J](#), Central Receiving Operations
- c. [270-FORM-0098, Suspicious Mail Handling Log](#)

### P.4 CANCELLATION

270-WI-1490.0.1B – Handling Suspicious Mail

### P.5 TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS

- a. X-ray machine
- b. Nitrile Gloves, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) approved for use in mailroom facilities (optional)
- c. N95 Particulate Respirators, OSHA approved for use in mailroom facilities (optional)
- d. High Efficiency Particulate Accumulation filtration system glove box

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## **P.6 SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND WARNINGS**

None.

## **P.7 TRAINING**

All MSC employees shall be briefed quarterly on proper procedures for identifying and handling suspicious mail items and all new employees will be briefed within their first week of working in the MSC. The MSC Supervisor will also brief employees annually on the proper use and disposal of gloves and respirators. The list of suspicious mail indicators will be visibly posted in the MSC for reference purposes.

## **P.8 RECORDS**

<b>Record Title</b>	<b>Record Custodian</b>	<b>Retention</b>
270-FORM-0098, Suspicious Mail Handling Log	Mail Service Center Supervisor	*NRRS 1/87 E, Destroy when 1 year old.
Contractor's Employee Training Log	Mail Service Center Supervisor	*NRRS 1/87 E, Destroy when 1 year old.

\*NRRS – NASA Records Retention Schedules ([NPR 1441.1](#))

## **P.9 METRICS**

The Suspicious Mail Log, Form 270-FORM-0098, shall be reviewed monthly to ensure proper communication and handling of suspicious mail pieces.

## **P.10 DEFINITIONS**

Suspicious Mail – all mail items, which include letters, parcels, and boxes, that have an appearance such that the contents of the mail item are considered potentially threatening. The MSC shall use a USPS, DHS, and GSA published list of suspicious indicators to judge whether or not an item is suspicious.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

In this document, a requirement is identified by “shall,” a good practice by “should,” permission by “may” or “can,” expectation by “will,” and descriptive material by “is.”

### **1. General Procedures**

All mail coming in to the MSC shall be scanned through the GSFC receiving and inspection x-ray process before any mail is delivered to the MSC.

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All MSC personnel may wear protective gloves and masks while receiving, sorting, and delivering all mail items. The MSC Supervisor and the logistics support contractor will make gloves and masks available to employees to use at their discretion.

## 2. Processing Incoming Mail

- a. MSC employees shall visually screen each piece of mail for suspicious mail indicators, using the GSA, DHS, and USPS provided suspicious indicator list as a reference tool. The US Postal Inspection Service provides a suspicious mail indicator list in their document titled "Guide to Mail Center Security".
- b. The MSC supervisor shall ensure a current copy of the Guide to Mail Center Security remains posted in the sorting area of the MSC so that it may be easily referenced. The MSC Supervisor will check the GSA, DHS, and USPS web sites quarterly to ensure that the most recent version of the suspicious indicators list is being used. Current GSA, DHS, and USPS suspicious package indicators include the following features:
  - (1) No return address and/or restrictive markings
  - (2) Possible mail from a foreign country
  - (3) Excessive postage
  - (4) Misspelled words
  - (5) Addressed to title only or to an incorrect title
  - (6) Protruding wires
  - (7) Lopsided or uneven in weight or appearance
  - (8) Rigid or bulky in appearance
  - (9) Strange odor
  - (10) Wrong title with name of addressee
  - (11) Oily stains, discolorations or crystallization on wrapper
  - (12) Excessive tape or string
  - (13) Visual distractions
  - (14) Hand written or poorly typed address
  - (15) Threatening message on outside of package
  - (16) Powdery substances on outside of package or leaking from inside package
- c. Suspicious items that are seen as having the potential to pose an immediate threat, for example those which contain protruding wires or powdery substances, will be placed gently on the nearest flat surface. If the item has not been handled, the package will remain untouched and in its original position. The MSC employee shall immediately call 911. After calling 911 the Medical and Environmental Division (Code 250), and the Occupational Safety and Health Division (Code 350), and the MSC supervisor shall be notified. All individuals in the MSC area will immediately evacuate the area and wait outside of the MSC for further instructions from the MSC supervisor or Security personnel. This includes all employees and customers who are in the MSC area at the time the suspicious package is identified.

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Once all employees have been evacuated and the area has been secured, the MSC Supervisor shall notify the prime contractor's Distribution Branch Manager and the GSFC Mail Manager of the situation. In the event that neither of these individuals can be immediately reached, the MSC Supervisor will proceed to notify the Information and Logistics Management Division at extension 6-5733. The Suspicious Mail Log, 270-FORM-0098, will be completed by the MSC Supervisor once the immediate threat has been resolved and it is safe to return to the MSC to do so.

d. MSC employees shall notify the MSC Supervisor immediately if a suspicious item has leaked a substance on to themselves or the work area. The MSC Supervisor will immediately call 911 and ensure that MSC employees are taking appropriate actions in accordance with this procedure. Employees will not attempt to clean up any work areas that have been soiled with the contents from a suspicious package. MSC employees wearing gloves will remove their gloves and place them into the nearest trash receptacle in the MSC. Any MSC employee who may have come into contact with the suspicious mail piece will then proceed to the nearest restroom where they will thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water. Once the hand washing is completed, all personnel will immediately return to a designated area outside of the MSC and await further instructions. Under no circumstances should employees who were in the presence of a suspicious package with unknown contents leave the designated waiting area unless instructed to do so by either GSFC Security personnel or the MSC Supervisor.

e. Once the safety of people and property has been secured, the GSFC Protective Services Division may want to discuss the events surrounding the suspicious package with MSC employees and anyone else who may have knowledge surrounding the events. All employees who have any knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the receipt and handling of the suspicious mail piece shall provide that information to the GSFC Protective Services Division investigators.

f. Suspicious items that have the appearance of causing no immediate threat shall be reported to the MSC Supervisor. The MSC mail handler shall immediately place those mail pieces into the outer chamber of the glove box and contact the GSFC Protective Services Division, Code 240, to have the items reviewed and opened. The MSC Supervisor shall log the mail piece on to the 270-FORM-0098 to track the date the piece was placed in the glove-box and the date that the GSFC Protective Services Division was notified of the mail piece. At the end of the workday, the MSC Supervisor will e-mail the GSFC Protective Services Division representative to inform him/her of items that were placed in the glove box that day. This e-mail notification serves as a back up to the phone call that is placed to the GSFC Protective Services Division on the same subject.

The GSFC Protective Services Division representative shall use the glove box to open and inspect these suspicious mail pieces and return all opened packages that are determined to be safe to the MSC for sorting and delivery. The GSFC Protective Services Division representative will initial and date the 270-FORM-0098 for each suspicious mail piece that was reviewed and processed.

In the event that a GSFC Protective Services Division representative does not review and process a suspicious mail piece within 2 business days of having been notified by the MSC Supervisor, the MSC Supervisor will contact the GSFC Protective Services Division again and annotate this action on the 270-FORM-0098. The MSC Supervisor will notify the logistics contractor's Transportation Branch

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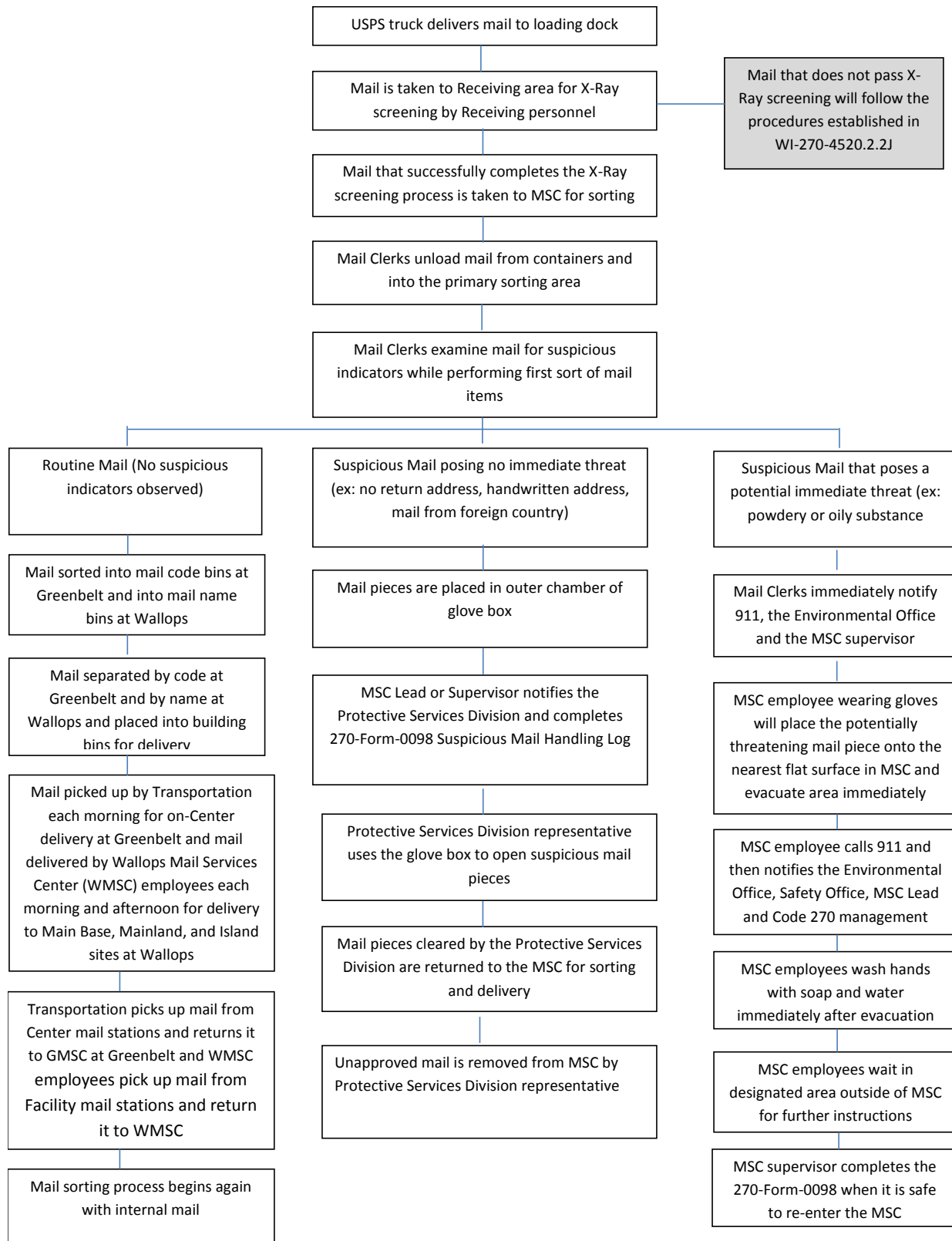
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Manager on extension 6-9597 and the GSFC Mail Manager on extension 6-4422 when a suspicious mail piece has been waiting processing for more than 2 business days.

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### CHANGE HISTORY LOG

Revision	Effective Date	Description of Changes
Baseline	10/08/03	Initial Release
A	12/02/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add in requirement for completing 270-FORM-0098 log when placing suspicious mail pieces in the glove box.</li><li>• Include notification of the Distribution Manager and the GSFC Mail Manager of the receipt of a suspicious package.</li><li>• Clarified notification procedures for both identifying a suspicious mail piece and reporting of that mail piece.</li><li>• Reviewed work instruction to ensure that requirements were clearly defined as such.</li></ul>
A	05/14/06	Administratively updated to reflect a change in the owning organization code from 230 to 270.
B	1/1/10	Administratively updated to reflect changes in responsible organizations from Safety and Environmental to Protective Services Division.
C	11/1/12	Administratively updated to reflect Wallops Flight Facility procedures.

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